DAVID TODD

DRAWER 2

TODD RELATIVES

71.2009.085.04676

Todd Family

David Todd

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the

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71.2009 085. 04676

David H. Todd, Esq., of Kentucky, brother-in-law to President Lincoln, has received an appointment as First Lieutenant in the Confederate army.

A Memphis paper says two nephews of Lieut-

NEWS FROM CHARLESTON, S. C.

B. Transcript — Oct 2, 1861

THE SOUTH ALARMED.

SOUTH CAROLINA REGIMENTS CALLED HOME.

CRUEL TREATMENT OF PRISONERS AT RICHMOND.

New York, 2d. Washington despatches state that Mr. Davis. late policeman at Charleston, was sent to Nashville for a prisoner, and managed to get into Kentucky, thence to Washington. He left Charleston on the 18th of September, at which time there were 500 men on Sullivan's Island and 1000 at Fort Sumter. Sand batteries were being erected for the protection of the city at all points.

The quarters of the Union prisoners in Castle Pinckney are more comfortable than at Richmond. There is considerable sympathy among the Irish in Charleston for Corcoran, but they dared not exhibit it. The pirate Dixie is commanded by a Massachusetts traitor named Moore. The Sallie and Gordon were in Charleston when he left. Only three vessels had run the blockade.

The Times despatch states that the reported naval expeditions have alarmed the extreme Southern States. The Governor of South Carolina has demanded the return of his regiments, and some have gone.

An arrival from Richmond states that the rebel treatment of the prisoners is very bad, especially since the late escapes. The most brutal of the officers was Captain Todd, Mrs. Lincoln's brother, who would kick the dead bodies of our men, calling them d——d abolitionists; and his depravity at length, in this respect, brought charges against him by rebel officers, and he was detailed to other duty. Gen. Winder is also very brutal to prisoners.

The rebels were all calculating on wintering in Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. This person estimates that there are 250,000 troops in Virginia, well armed, clothed, shod and provisioned.

Dear Dr. Warren,

I have in my library an old book written in 1861 by an inmate of the Richmond Tobacco Warehouse which was a Prison during the Civil war.

The following is copy of a paragraph on page 129.

" Lieutenant Todd, Commandant of the post, left Richmond previous to the arrival of the Federal prisoners captured at Balls Bluff, but there remained behind him a reputation, surpassing record of his cruelty and imbruted inhumanity. Drunk during nearly the entire period of his authority at the prison, and seething with malignity and bitterness, he made the life of the Federal officers of daily indignity and hardship. Foul and Scurrilous abuse was heaped upon them at his every visit: sentinels were charged to bayonet them at the slightest infringement of prison-rules; men were shot down at prison-windows by his orders; and, as if nature had centered the essence of evil in his foul heart, on one occasion he thrust his sword into the midst of the crowd of Federal privates in the ware-house, regardless as to whose life he endangered. Fortunately, it passed through a man's leg, and not his body."

In your August 16th Lincoln Lore it mentions one Captain Todd as being very cruel, so we presume this is the same person mentioned above.

Yourd truly,

Henry A. Pershing
1235 Longfellow Ave.
South Bend, Indiana.

Henry A Pershing

There is one item about Fords Theatre, viz. - The few times I have visited the old theatre I have noted that the old hitching rack in the rear, where of course Booth tied his horse, previous to his shooting of Lincoln, was still the[illegible] It is about the only item connecting, that is really genuine. It was there a few years ago.

(Excuse this torn page)

Jerdie Kennedy

December 14, 1943

Mr. H.A. Pershing
1235 Longfellow Ave.
South Bend, Ind.

My dear Mr. Pershing:

Thank you very much for calling to my attention the order book or memorandum book, rather, by one of the Civil War prisoners relating to the cruelty of Lt. Todd. Also the little observation about the Ford Theatre hitching rack which is of interest.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

"A Very Brutal Man": Lewis Horton, David Todd, and Prisoner Torture

September 30, 2013

gettysburgcompiler.com

By Sarah Johnson, '15

In the late summer of 1861, just after the battle of Bull Run, Union seaman Lewis Horton was captured while serving on the U.S.S. Massachusetts and taken to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. In transport, Horton would recall being shackled to his comrades and marched through the streets for people to jeer at and being forced to spend a night in a building used for convict slaves. Hobnails, Horton remembered, had been hammered partly into the walls and floors of the building, making it too torturous to lie down or lean against the walls. Once he arrived in Richmond, Horton would meet the commandant of the prison, Lieutenant David Todd. Todd was none other than the half-brother of Mary Todd Lincoln, one of several of her siblings to swear loyalty to the Confederacy.

As commandant of Libby Prison, Todd would make a name for himself because of his shocking cruelty to prisoners. Prisoners were given rotten food, nearly no medical treatment, and lived in filth. In addition to this, Horton would recall he was "...a very brutal man. I saw him saber a poor fellow one day because the prisoner had a small bit of lighted candle in order to see to dress his wound. He cut him to the bone. On the least provocation Todd would inflict cruelties on the poor fellow." Horton and others would also recall that Todd ordered several men to be executed just for trying to look out a window.

libby prison

Todd's actions would bring shame on the Lincoln house. *Harper's Weekly* would go so far in November of 1862 as to describe in detail the sympathies of Mrs. Lincoln's siblings. Regarding David Todd, *Harper's* would comment on his brutality and remark that conditions had gotten so bad that Jefferson Davis was forced to remove him after two months. "It is probably this division of sentiment," *Harper's* remarked, "which has given rise to the gossip and scandal respecting the views of the lady who presides over the White House." Indeed, although later prisoners would acknowledge that some of the horror stories that came out of Libby Prison were exaggerated, they were adamant that the stories about Todd were not.

Often prisoner mistreatment like this is associated with the later war period of 1864-65. In 1861 there were still many generals holding on to notions of conciliation and the prisoner exchange system was still in effect. To find such horrible accounts of prisoner mistreatment so early in the war may be surprising. Nevertheless, when Horton was paroled and discharged in March 1862, he carried with him experiences of cruelty at the hands of Confederates. Perhaps this experience was a main factor in his immediate reenlistment on the U.S.S. Rhode Island, where his courage would be tested.

Sources:

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Stephen Barry, *House of Abraham: Lincoln & The Todds, A Family Divided By War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007), p. 97.
"Mrs. Lincoln," Harper's Weekly, November 8, 1862. Accessed via Harpweek database.

Photo:
Library of Congress